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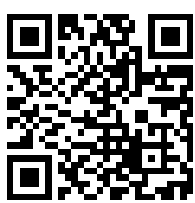

THE BULGARS

SELF STYLED

PRUSSIANS OF THE BALKANS

BY

PETER THRAX

GREEK GOVERNMENT OFFICE OF INFORMATION
NEW YORK

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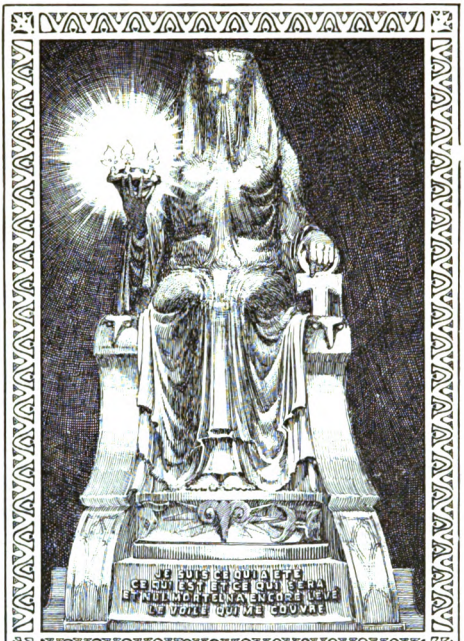

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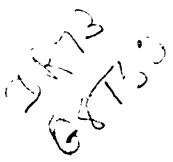

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CHAPTER I

BULGARIA IN 1941

In April 1941, Great Britain alone, among the Great Powers, was facing the war machine of the Axis, which appeared to be unconquerable. France had collapsed nearly a year before. Russia and the United States were still neutral. No ray of hope was visible on the international horizon. Only one small country, Greece, disregarding figures and machines, rose once more as an eternal symbol of love for freedom. She had fought for six months against the treacherous attack of the Italians. During this period, with her repeated victories, Greece struck deadly blows against Axis prestige and slowed down the time table of their proposed conquests. However, on April 6, 1941, 7 million Greeks were attacked by two peoples simultaneously, numbering 120 millions. To the Italian treachery, German cowardice was added.

The Greek army, retreating in Albania in their unequal struggle because of the German attack, bravely continued capturing Italian prisoners, while in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace the defenders of the Greek border forts gallantly carried out against the Germans their "die or be victorious" oath with true Greek heroism in such a way that many months after, the German High Command was unable to solve the mystery of the heavy losses suffered by their troops.... The heart of Greece-Athens—was still beating freely and Crete was preparing for her new Arkadi. The Greek guns had not been completely silenced. The last shots for the time being were fired on May 30, 1941.

1. Invasion of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

Bulgaria, at this moment, outlawed and dishonored herself forever in the eyes of civilized nations by an act which she had carefully prepared and systematically organized.

On April 23, Bulgaria, under Prime Minister Bogdan Filov, Hon. Doctor of Philosophy of the Athens University and president of the "Greco-Bulgarian Association" unleashed behind

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the German Panzer divisions, without any declaration of war, the hordes of the Bulgarian regular army against the unarmed population of Eastern Macedonia, Thrace and South Serbia.

During those sad days—for Greece and humanity—there was not one human being, one free or enslaved nation with any notion of honor, which did not regard with aversion the cowardly Bulgarian crimes against a people who had proved that they knew how to fight for their freedom to the very last, and even when it was clear that their struggle was of no avail.

The Bulgarian invasion of Greek territories, the invasion by the vile servants of the Axis beast of a country whose population could no more defend itself, was a provocation to the world's conscience. From 1935 onwards, it is true the world had become almost accustomed to the crimes of Italian Fascism and German national socialism. The attack against Abyssinia, the bloody suppression of Democracy in Spain, the forceful annexation of Austria, the abolition of Czechoslovakian Democracy, the swallowing up of Albania, the attack against Poland, the violation of Dutch and Belgian neutrality and the aggression against Greece, had created a mentality ready to tolerate every new crime. But none of these crimes was so detestably low and cowardly as the Bulgarian one, for if people detest murderers, they detest even more the desecrators of corpses, who wait for the murderer's departure in order to profit, like hyenas, from the spoils without taking any risk.

The despicable role of desecrators of corpses was chosen by Bulgaria; it was thus even baser than the role of Fascist Italy, which nevertheless had become an expert in bandit attacks against small countries, and which had stabbed France in the back, when she was at her last breath. Italy at least fought one battle against the French forces; Bulgaria, however, fought none against the Greeks. Cautiously she waited first for the German steam-roller to smash her neighbor in the North of Greece, postponing her appearance on the scene of the tragedy. Only when the flames and smoke of battle had cleared and a mournful silence had spread over Greece's northern provinces, did Bulgaria start her invasion, safe and sure of her "victory" over

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defenceless populations; ready to indulge in an orgy of extermination of the Greek population, an orgy which is still going on.

Two months before her attack on Greece—on March 1, 1941—Bulgaria had already put at the German disposal, her production, her communications, her barracks, her aerodromes, the whole mechanism of her state. It was from her soil that the mechanized hordes of General Von List operated in their attack on Greece and Yugoslavia. Bulgaria's reward for this aid was the rich prize of Eastern Macedonia, Thrace and South Serbia, territories belonging to Greece or Yugoslavia, countries with whom the Bulgarians had been in normal relations. With Yugoslavia, especially, they were bound by a pact of "eternal friendship".

2. Peoples and Governments

The Bulgarian crime against two of her neighbours is so dastardly and low that the problem immediately arises: Who is responsible for this crime? Are the whole Bulgarian people responsible for it or only a "clique" of pro-German leaders? To make the problem clearer, Was the occupation of Eastern Macedonia, Thrace and Southern Serbia carried out with the approval of the Bulgarian people or against their will? Was the cowardly policy of the King and the Bulgarian government in agreement with the people's wishes? If these questions are answered in the negative the problem still remains of, how was it possible for the government to follow such a policy if the people did not desire it.

The peoples who were the victims of the criminal policy of Bulgaria have a definite answer to these questions. For the Greek and Serbian peoples it is not possible to make any distinction between the Bulgarian government and the great majority of the Bulgarian people regarding their responsibility for the crimes committed against them. Recent historical experience has proved that no government can follow a foreign policy of fundamental and decisive importance for the country, when the great majority of the people are opposed to it. The

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enslaved peoples, for one thing, have not until now had the occasion to notice differences between German Nazis, simple reservists and agents of the Gestapo, Italian blackshirts, Italian regular Army men and carabinieri, Bulgarian comitadjis, men of the Bulgarian regular army and Bulgarian civil servants. All have acted in accordance with the predatory and criminal policy of their governments.

When a people truly disagree with the policy of their government upon basic problems of foreign policy, which may determine the fate of a nation for long periods of years, they always have the means to manifest their disapproval at the critical moment. For example, we have the attitude of the Greek people, who in 1917 disagreed with their government and revolted, since they wanted to fight on the Allies' side and not remain neutral; in more recent times we have the example of the Serbian people who, two days after the agreement with the Axis of the Chvetcovitch government and the Regent Prince Paul, rose unanimously against the traitors on March 27, 1941, overthrew their government and hailed this event as a great victory, although they were well aware of the fate which awaited them.

3. Brigand "World Conceptions"

The "Free Bulgarians" abroad and the present government are now trying to throw their country's and their people's responsibilities upon the late King Boris and his government. The Bulgarian people, they say, do not approve of the pro-German policy of their government, but have no means of overthrowing it. Our answer is that they sufficiently approved this policy or they would have revolted. The crimes committed against Greece and Yugoslavia are naturally passed over in silence by these gentlemen, since they are crimes which cannot but presuppose the consent and cooperation of the Bulgarian masses; on the other hand thus shamelessly they carry out an apologetic propaganda in the capitals of the Allies, trying to gain the sympathy of allied public opinion for the Bulgarians whom they attempt to present as victims of an ambitious and pro-German "clique".

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Each people and each nation has a history revealing, but also forming, its character. For this reason, when one wants to form an opinion about the responsibilities of a people as a whole, there exists no better and surer method than to take historical experience into account.

It is not the first time that the Bulgarian nation rouses the conscience of the world with its acts. Bulgaria's history is full of cases of double-dealing, double-crossing and reaction during the most critical moments of the history of the Balkans or of the whole world. We shall now examine this history, restricting our investigation to the relatively short—but rich in events—period, during which the Bulgarian people, influenced by the liberation movements of the 19th century, acquired a national conscience and organized themselves into a national state. We shall not enter into details on their dark ancient history and their darker acts during the Byzantine period. Their recent past is eloquent enough.

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CHAPTER II

BULGARIAN CHARACTER AND POLICY

Before analysing actual historical events, revealing the character of successive Bulgarian governments and in consequence the character of the Bulgarian people since 1878, when Bulgaria appeared as an independent state, until the present, it is essential to examine on the one hand the Bulgarians' soul as expressed in their folklore and, on the other, the ways of Bulgarian dynamism, during the period of Turkish domination and, later, at the time of the activities of the "haiduks" and "comitadjis". These are instinctive and spontaneous manifestations, which are therefore indicative of a people's character.

1. Bulgarian Folksongs

All foreigners who have studied the folklore of the Balkans have been impressed by the fact that Bulgarian folksongs as compared with Greek and Serbian ones, are fundamentally different. While the latter folksongs are inspired by a high civilization, a chivalrous disposition which expresses itself in the admiration for woman and child, in deep sympathy for the poor and weak, ardent love for freedom and astonishing magnanimity towards the defeated enemy, the Bulgarian songs are on the contrary deprived of any heroic and liberating element and are full of hymns praising common acts of robbery, rape, murder and hair-raising cruelties. "The Bulgarians have no national heroes, neither must one try to find in the Bulgarian folksongs the beautiful elements of the Greek folksongs and the Serbian 'pesna'. The Bulgarian folksongs report with pleasure horrible cruelties and describe corpses cut to pieces, severed heads, jugs full of tepid blood. The Greek never insists on such pictures, and if he happens to meet them he turns his head aside."[1]

An example of this tradition and mentality is the famous war

[1] Alb. Dumont: Les Balkans et l'Adriatique (1874), p. 163-164.

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song composed during World War I by Arcoudoff, one of Bulgaria's greatest poets. This war song does certainly not lack poetical value and power. Its images are very lively and its cannibalistic lyricism may cause shudders even to the most insensitive reader. It lacks one thing: humanity. We give its complete text, as one of the most gruesome monuments of literature:

"Even before the star of day rises seven fathoms on the sky the lake of blood, which the Bulgarian sword will spill, must be higher than seven fathoms. Do you see this bent old man who drags his miserable old age around and wants to deceive death? Break him to pieces under your feet, tear out his dull eyes with a fork, for they are not worthy to admire the grandeur of Bulgaria, and tell him to eat them, as he is three days hungry and thirsty. What are you waiting for, young Bulgarian? Forwards ever forwards!

"The velvet-carpet formed by the bodies of women and children is even softer than the grass of April. Take their freshness for yourself and when you will rejoice upon the juicy fruit of youth when you are full of delight and heroism, then break their bodies and pass over them as if they were a royal carpet. Let the shoe of your horse trample the breasts of women so that the milk which gives life to our enemies may dry up. What are you waiting for, Bulgarian youth? Forwards ever forwards!

"Son of the typhoon, imitate your fathers. Wherever you pass sow devastation, that no child may rejoice upon his mother's breast, that no old man may lean on his grandson's shoulder. Throw their heads to the hungry dogs who smell at night that you are approaching and lick their lips, and throw their souls into Tartarus where the endless abyss is gaping, ready to swallow every soul which is not worth to lift her eyes towards the light of the Bulgarian sun. And before God's day rises, may only skeletons and human rags remain on the ruins spread by your hand and may the scent of burning human flesh ascend to the sky, this incense so much beloved by the Gods of the Bulgarian Olympus. Forwards, young men of Bulgaria. Forwards, ever forwards!"[2]

2. Bulgarian Dynamism (Haiduks and Comitadjis)

The dynamism of the Bulgarian people expressed itself during the period of Turkish domination, in the activity of the "haiduks," and after the formation of a Bulgarian national state,

[2] The translation was taken from the booklet E.E.A.: Bulgaria and Greece (Athens 1943), p. 8.

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in the activities of the "comitadjis." The "haiduks" have nothing in common with the Greek "Klephts". The Bulgarian people do not have anything to display comparable to the systematic and stubborn struggle of the Greeks against the Ottoman overlords. The real motives of the "haiduks' " activities were not the desire for freedom, the desire of shaking off the Turkish yoke, and the wish of forming a free Bulgarian state. The "haiduks" took to the mountains for the sole reason that robbery—the robbing of Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, Serbs—, was the most profitable of professions.

"In Greece the 'Klephts', as, in Croatia, the 'uskoks' and, in Serbia, the 'haiduks', carried on, through great perils, their resistance against the foreign conqueror; when defeated, they knew how to die heroically, suffering with admirable endurance, and stoicism the most horrible tortures. The Bulgarian 'haiduks' —on the contrary—were bandits and, judging from the songs, which narrate their deeds, they were nothing else than vulgar and savage murderers and cowardly incendiaries. Their first aim was booty. . . . Thus, though the Aimos and the Rodopi are as suitable as the Pindos and the Olympus, as operation bases of a struggle against the Turks, the surprising fact is that in the poetry which developed in the former mountains not the slightest protest exists against moslem tyranny,"[8] whereas in Greece the narrow limits of Souli were enough to nurture epics of the most inspiring heroism.

The comitadjis' moral and national standards after the formation of the Bulgarian national state were not much more exalted. They appeared on the international stage in 1894. A distinguished Bulgarian, with a life full of adventure and activity, who is now touring the allied capitals in the elegant guise of a "Free Bulgarian" and who was himself a comitadji from 1905-1910 expresses his opinion of the activities of the "Interior Macedonian Revolutionary Organization" (which is known under the initials O.R.I.M. or I.M.R.O.), that is to say the Comitadji organization, when he left it, as follows:

"The I.M.R.O. had degenerated (1913) into a mere band of ter-

[8] Aug. Dozen: Chansons populaires Bulgares (1875).

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rorists doing King Ferdinand's dirty work. . . . The newer leaders followed like jackals on the heels of the regular troops, exploited the occupation of Thrace for personal gain and committed horrible outrages against the Turks, such as locking them in their mosques and burning them alive."[4] After some years, in 1917, when Bulgaria was fighting on Germany's side, this author is again forced to speak "of the crimes of Bulgarian officials in occupied Serbian territory, of wholesale murders, robberies and rape committed by Macedonians—as he calls them—comitadjis, who were now no more than bandits in German pay."[5]

The same Bulgar gentleman gives us in his book a charming picture of the passing crisis in the comitadjis' profession in 1937:

"For the first time in years," he says, "I could now move freely through the streets of Sofia. Mikhailov's assassins had gone out of business. I ran into many of them in the cafes on the Marie-Louise street, gloomily drinking coffee instead of wine and complaining of hard times. Until Georgiev suppressed the I.M.R.O., the Marie-Louise cafes had been the curb exchange for their hired labor as far back as I could remember. In their heyday they could command wine in credit, paying up after each job. Now they sat around grumbling without their revolvers, unemployed."[6]

But this distressing unemployment did not last, it seems, very long. The I.M.R.O. has the power to arise from its ashes. This Bulgar author is forced to confess that after only a few years, that is to say, from March, 1941 onwards, "the gangsters of the I.M.R.O. are playing an ignoble role in the pay of the invader—as he likes to call the Germans in Bulgaria—as members of the Bulgarian police and the Gestapo."[7] It is thus obvious how movements and tendencies expressing the deeper characteristics of a people cannot be dissolved by legislative measures, and do not disappear.

3. The Character of the Bulgarian State

The advocates of Bulgaria have recently advanced the argument that the criminal and dishonest policy Bulgaria has fol-

[4] Kosta Todorov: Balkan Firebrand (Chicago-New York 1943), p. 41.
[5] Ibid., p. 95.
[6] Ibid., p. 275.
[7] Ibid., p. 331.

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lowed during the present war is due to a "fascist clique" under the leadership of King Boris, who died so mysteriously; this policy does not correspond, they say, with the desires and the history of the Bulgarian people. In answer to this argument it is only necessary to recall certain historic events, most of which occurred during a period when fascism had not yet spread over Europe; these give an eloquent picture of the character and the notion of honour of the Bulgarian state from the time of its foundation.

a. The First Test of Bulgaria as a Nation

By the treaty of Berlin (1878) Bulgaria was recognized as an independent principality under the Sultan's formal sovereignty. A year later (April 26, 1879) the "Statut Organique" of Eastern Rumelia was drawn up by an International Committee as provided in article 18 of the Treaty of Berlin. Owing, however, to the fact that not only in Bulgaria proper, but also in Eastern Rumelia, Greek populations existed amounting to about 130,000 with prosperous and developed communities, and many perfectly organized Greek schools, owing to the fact that these Greek communities were always in the lead of any movement of civilization and progress, both the Treaty of Berlin (in articles 4 and 5) and the "Statut Organique" provided for the political (articles 24-32), religious (articles 28, 29, 337-339, 355), linguistic (articles 22, 75, 77), and educational (articles 38, 344-349, 356, 359, 360), freedoms of the Greek population in Bulgaria.

Furthermore, following the insistence of the Austrian representative on the committee for the drawing up of the "Statut Organique" of Eastern Rumelia, the Greek language was chosen together with Bulgarian and Turkish, as the *official* language of the region: "I insist," said the Austrian representative, "that equal rights be given to the Greek language, not only because since long ago the Greek Church has ruled this country, but because the Greeks have progressed much more than the Bulgarians and the Turks. I do not wish to examine the reasons for

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this, but it is indisputable that the Greeks living here are civilized and civilizing elements which we cannot ignore. If we decide to exclude their language, we shall commit an injustice not only against them, but also against the whole country."[8]

Notwithstanding all these provisions of the Treaty of Berlin and the "Statut Organique" of E. Rumelia, persecutions of the Greek elements began, according to a report of the British Consul of Pyrgos, Brophy (October, 1878) and the statement of the British Colonel Wilson;[9] the Bulgarians who were appointed by Czarist Russia as administrative employees since 1878 violated all freedoms of the Greek populations, which had been guaranteed by the above mentioned treaties; they closed down the Greek schools, imposed heavy taxes on the Greeks, excluded every possibility of their participating in the administration of the country, dissolved all Greek communities and imposed Bulgarian councils on them, murdered notables, forbade them to travel and deal with Bulgarians, burned Greek houses, etc. These were the first tests they took as a civilized modern European state. In September, 1885 the Bulgarians occupied Eastern Rumelia by a coup d'etat. The situation of the Greeks worsened considerably.

b. Betrayal of Tricoupis' Plans

In 1891, the Greek Prime Minister Charilaos Tricoupis, in spite of all these persecutions of the Greek population in Bulgaria, visited Sofia with the hope of paving the way for real cooperation between the Balkan states. The Bulgarian Prime Minister received Tricoupis with all the formalities of etiquette and with obliging smiles, but as soon as the Greek Premier left, he hastened to give away to Sultan Abdul Hamid the Greek statesman's proposals and the contents of the confidential talks he had had with Tricoupis, and in exchange he asked and received from the Sublime Porte certain advantages as a reward for this "honest" service.[10]

[8] E.E.A. Bulgaria and Greece (Athens 1943), p. 11.
[9] Blue Book, Turkey (1880), p. 18 and 139-156.
[10] J. D. Bourchier: The Balkan question (London 1915), p. 89.

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c. Double-crossing in Salonica (1912)

In the middle of 1912, and following the efforts of Venizelos, an agreement of the four states—Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro—was reached for common action against Turkey. The first indications of this agreement appeared in February, 1912, during the celebrations of the Bulgarian crown prince's coming of age, in which Greece took part with cordiality. Previously, owing to Venizelos' efforts, the Greek and Bulgarian representatives in the Turkish parliament had formed a common political group and the relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarian Exarchate had considerably improved.[11]

During the preliminary talks for the conclusion of an alliance, the Greek government submitted a plan to the Bulgarian government for the fixing of frontiers and national revindications, in order to avoid any dispute after victory on the distribution of the Turkish territories conquered. Bulgaria, however, avoided defining her demands, as Guechov, then Bulgarian Prime Minister, confessed later.[12] This uncooperative attitude was followed because the Bulgarians believed they would be able to occupy the whole of Thrace together with Constantinople early enough to turn towards Macedonia and Salonica, before the Greeks together with the Serbians and the Montenegrins would succeed in overcoming Turkish resistance in their sector. Their hopes were shattered in the course of events because the Turks on the one hand held the Bulgarian army on the Tsataldja line, while on the other hand the Greek army entered Salonica very shortly after the battle of Yannitsa.

With this upset in their plans, the Bulgarians, in order to produce facts to base future demands on Salonica, urgently sent the 7th Division under Teodorov with the order to ensure co-occupation of the town. The pretext given was that these troops were tired and in need of rest. The Greek Field Marshal, not suspecting the intentions of the Bulgarians, gave his consent.

[11] C. A. Ferrari: Vicendee problemi della peninsola Balcanica (Milano 1937), p. 189.

[12] Gughov: L'Alliance Balcanique (Paris 1915).

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Teodorov, however, immediately after his entry into Salonica, impudently wired King Ferdinand of Bulgaria that he was putting the town under his sceptre, a report which was immediately trumpeted to the whole world by the Bulgarian News Agency. Following this action, the Bulgarians proceeded to appoint in Salonica their own political and military authorities, establishing a harbourmaster's office and a telegraph office. Moreover, they began smuggling into Salonica not only guns, explosives and bombs but also Bulgarian irregulars and comitadjis, who caused various incidents. . . . Their treachery reached such an extent, that Bulgarian detachments attacked Greek detachments outside Salonica in the Nigrita and in the Pangeon areas and the Bulgarian coastal batteries shelled the Greek cruiser "Psara". Greece, unable to suffer a continuation of the situation, reacted energetically. The Bulgarians in Salonica were soon obliged to surrender; during the fighting which occurred inside the town, they lost 54 regular and 11 irregular soldiers, while prisoners taken amounted to 14 officers and 1,260 men.

d. Perfidious Bulgarian Activities Continue

In the first days of November, 1912 the great Vizir of Turkey, Kiamil Pasha, made armistice proposals to King Ferdinand of Bulgaria to be submitted to the four states of the Balkan Alliance. The Bulgarian Government, however, did not transmit these proposals to the other allied governments, as it should have done, but waited until it was assured by the development of military operations that it was impossible to break through the Tsataedja line and occupy Constantinople. Furthermore, after the cessation of hostilities in the Balkans, the peace conference of London, which was held on January 16, 1913, provided another opportunity for Bulgaria to exercise her perfidy. While the official representatives of all the victorious Balkan states demanded from Turkey the whole region south of the Ainos-Media line, Bulgaria secretly sent an envoy, Kosta Hadjikaltchiev, to Turkey, who informed the Turkish government that Bulgaria was prepared to order her London representatives to cease supporting the common demands of the Balkan states, if

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Turkey would give her Adrianople and would undertake to support the autonomy of Macedonia.

e. Bulgaria's Attack on Former Allies (1913)

On May 30, 1913, the Treaty of London was signed. According to the terms of this treaty, it was stipulated that Turkey should transfer to the Balkan Allies all her European territories with the exception of Constantinople, and the part of Thrace east of a line drawn from Ainos on the Aegean to Media on the Black Sea. The Treaty of London, however, did not settle the particulars of the distribution of those territories between the victors; for this purpose, on June 14, the Tsar of Russia, as foreseen by the treaty (art. 4), invited the Prime Ministers of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia to Petrograd for a conference of arbitration. Suddenly, while the Greek and Serbian Prime Ministers were preparing to leave for the conference, the Bulgarians, without notice and declaration of war, attacked the Greeks and the Serbians on the whole Macedonian front on June 30, 1913.

The causes of this treacherous attack against allies are revealed to us by a Bulgarian author: "A few weeks later (after the Treaty of London of May 30) I was shocked," he writes, "to learn that Bulgaria had attacked its former allies. . . . King Ferdinand had made a secret agreement with Austria to attack the Serbs and Greeks, at the very moment when Russia was ready to settle their territorial dispute by arbitration."[18] As was only natural, the Bulgarians were rapidly and completely defeated, the Greek troops reaching the outskirts of Sofia. Bulgaria, notwithstanding her perfidy and her defeat, was treated leniently. During the peace conference of Bucharest which followed (August 9, 1913), the Greek Delegation, headed by Venizelos, allowed Bulgaria to keep Western Thrace and let her off without the payment even of war damages. Thus, despite all her treachery and ill-faith, Bulgaria came out of the Balkan wars with territorial advantages. According to official statistics her territory, which on December 31, 1910, was 33,647 square miles with a population of 4,337,516, was increased to 43,305 square miles with a population of 4,752,997 after the Balkan wars.

[18] Kosta Todorov: op. cit., p. 37-38.

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f. Double-crossing of the Entente (1915)

After the Treaty of Bucharest, Bulgaria bound her fate to the Central Powers, Germany and Austro-Hungary. Nevertheless, when the war of 1914 was declared, she proclaimed that she would fight on the side of the Entente. "Meanwhile," Todorov writes, "the I.M.R.O. had gone over to the service of the Central Powers and was preparing for a guerilla attack on the Serbian rear, to help the Austrians whom the Serbs had twice defeated. King Ferdinand and the Radoslavov government feigned neutrality while permitting arms to pass freely through Bulgaria to Germany's ally, Turkey. The Germans had bribed a large number of Bulgarian politicians and journalists to advocate an alliance with Germany and an attack on Serbia."[14] Thus the whole Bulgarian dynamic ruling class were deceiving the Allies. This double-crossing was perhaps the chief reason for the failure of the Allied attack against the Dardanelles during 1915, because Germany had, with Bulgarian connivance, succeeded in arming Turkey in time.

Gradually, Bulgaria gave a more official tone to her secret and friendly relations with the Central Powers. Thus, during the first days of September 1915, an official military alliance between Bulgaria, Austria and Germany and, in addition, the separate Bulgarian-Turkish treaty, were signed at Pless. It should be noted that, when this alliance became known, the French Ambassador in Sofia de Panafieu, asked the Bulgarian Prime-Minister Radoslavov, on behalf of the Allied governments, about its significance. Radoslavov answered promptly that "this alliance will not stop Bulgaria from attacking Turkey". By this lie, which deceived the Entente, Bulgaria was allowed all the time to prepare herself for war and her sudden attack against the Serbian army, which she stabbed in the back.

g. Hypocritical Repentance after Defeat

On September 30, 1918, Bulgaria was forced to capitulate. From the very next day, a new type of deceit began being prac-

[14] Kosta Todorov: Balkan firebrand (Chicago-New York 1943), p. 60.

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ticed on the victorious Allies. The slogan adopted and trumpeted throughout the world was that Bulgaria was determined to break completely with her past, and that she was prepared to "collaborate" sincerely for a settlement in the Balkans. The manner in which defeated Bulgaria, which had double-crossed the Allies, conceived this settlement is told by a Bulgarian with unprecedented cynicism:

"After the armistice, the Sofia press wishfully emphasized Wilson's Fourteen Points as the basis for a just peace which would fix the Balkan borders along ethnological lines. Thus Bulgaria not only would lose no territory, but would even gain predominantly Bulgarian provinces in Macedonia, Thrace and Dobruja. For this very reason the Allies must be convinced that Bulgaria had broken completely with the past and wished to become a loyal collaborator in a new order for the Balkans."[15]

In this manner Bulgaria believed—as she believes now—that with clever propaganda and a few tears, she would succeed in winning from the victors, against whom she had fought, all the advantages which defeated Germany, on whose side she had fought, could have awarded her, if victorious. The facade was revamped. The "liberal" government of Radoslavov was changed for the Theodorov government, which did not take any measures against the persons responsible for the war, but sent to the various European capitals—as again in the present war—all those who they hoped could play the role of friends of the Allies. Among them were—as now—Kosta Todorov. On October 5, 1919, Stamboliski became Prime-Minister.

h. The Method of "Friendship to Allies"

Todorov—a man with a life full of activity and adventures, who had already been a comitadji in Macedonia, a terrorist in Russia, a legionary on the western front, invaded the salons of Paris as an advocate of his country. He was helped in this job by certain ladies. "On each occasion," he writes, "Mme . . . introduced me to all her guests and arranged several dinners at which I spoke for my country, stressing *the complete break with the*

[15] Kosta Todorov: Balkan firebrand (Chicago-New York 1943), p. 105.

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past and our honest desire to cooperate with the rest of Europe towards a stable peace."[16]

Thanks to his acquaintances, which he had used in Paris, Todorov succeeded in being received by Clemenceau (December 5, 1919) under the pretence of begging him for the release of 110,000 Bulgarians, who were kept prisoners in Greece, Serbia and Corsica.

"Behind the desk," he writes, "sat Clemenceau, wearing a black silk skullcap which made his face seem even rounder than it was. Sharp, dark eyes peered from under his bushy grey brows. His nose was small and round and his enormous white mustache concealed his chin as well as his mouth. He wore the happy expression of a bulldog about to bite.

"Suddenly I heard his crackling, angry voice: 'What do you want?' Neither by word or gesture did he invite me to be seated. I stood, ill at ease, in the middle of the room, feeling completely lost and mumbling words even I could not understand.

" 'Well', snapped Clemenceau, 'Talk. I'm busy.'

"I pulled myself together. 'In the name of the Bulgarian delegation *I appeal to your generosity* for the liberation of the Bulgarian prisoners, who long to see their homes.'

" 'Generosity!' His eyes flashed with rage. 'Now you appeal to my generosity! Have you forgotten all the evil Bulgaria did during the war?'

"This riled my Balkan blood. My timidity and confusion vanished. 'Mr. President, you seem to forget that Bulgaria is now ruled by men who spent the war in prison because they opposed it. As I listen to you I begin to regret that I fought as a volunteer in the ranks of the French army.' "

This statement of Todorov was naturally effective. The Tiger promised the release of the Bulgarian prisoners and Todorov, in retiring, made the deceiving promise:

"Mr. President, I ask you to help us rebuild Bulgaria. We wish *to destroy all traces of Ferdinand's rule* and to bring our country on the side of the peoples who long for peace."[17]

[16] Kosta Todorov: Balkan firebrand (Chicago-New York 1943), p. 114.
[17] Ibid., p. 124-125.

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i. Twenty Years After

But let us examine the result of the promises Bulgaria lavishly gave after her defeat. Let us examine her promised cooperation with her neighbors. Twenty years after, in 1938, when the various countries were studying their attitude towards the coming Second World War, Bulgaria double-crossed her Balkan neighbors once more. From 1934 to 1938, notwithstanding her declarations, according to which she wished nothing else but peace, and entertained no aggressive intentions against anybody, she persistently refused—although repeatedly invited—to participate in the Balkan Entente. Moreover, although she had already definitely decided to take place again on the side of the enemies of the democracies and was receiving from the Axis arms, organizers and instructions, she gambled on the love of peace of the other Balkan countries and in 1937 signed with Yugoslavia the deceitful agreement of "eternal friendship". Furthermore, under the engagement not to provoke by forceful means any territorial changes in the Balkans, she succeeded by the treaty of Salonica on July 31, 1938, in being released from all military restrictions imposed on her by the treaty of Neuilly (November 27, 1919).

At the outbreak of war in 1939, Bulgaria proclaimed her neutrality. This policy was reaffirmed by the Prime Minister Kiosseivanov, on January 1, 1940. The Bulgarian Government, in conformance with the lead given by the King, declared it would make every effort to preserve peace without jeopardising the nation's vital interests. A fortnight later Kiosseivanov took the opportunity of a visit to Sofia by a Turkish envoy to state that the four objects of Bulgaria's foreign policy were the maintenance of peace, the continuance of neutrality in order to maintain peace, good relations with neighbouring countries, and a just, friendly and peaceful solution of problems affecting Bulgaria, who *did not intend to take advantage of her neighbour's troubles.* On April 29, 1940, Bogdan Filoff, who had succeeded Kiosseivanov as Prime Minister, reasserted Bulgaria's determination as a loyal member of the Balkan family of nations, to do nothing which could injure the position of any other Balkan country or undermine mutual confidence in the Balkans. He

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even had the temerity to claim that Bulgaria's policy was inspired by the wider interests of the whole Balkan community.

From now on, a steady infiltration of German "tourists" into Bulgaria, begins, in October 1940, the Bulgarian Minister for Agriculture pays significant visits to Rome and Berlin. The blow to Axis hopes which Greece delivered at that time made the Bulgars cautious, and by mid-November Hitler was obliged to demand a personal visit from King Boris of Bulgaria, who probably thought it prudent to postpone the open adherence of Bulgaria to the Axis as long as possible, until he was sure the British would be unable to send sufficient help to Greece.

On November 26, 1940, the British Goverment, through Mr. H. A. Butler, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, attempted to encourage the presumed pro-British feelings of King Boris with the following announcement: "Provided that Bulgaria does *not* join or assist, either *actively or passively, the enemies of Great Britain nor attack her allies,* it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to do their best to ensure that in any eventual peace settlement to which Great Britain is a party the integrity and independence of Bulgaria shall be fully respected."

On March 1, 1941, Filov signed the Tripartite Pact at Vienna in the presence of Hitler, Ribbentrop and representatives of Italy and Japan; and at the same time Field-Marshal von List established his headquarters in Sofia. Bulgarian aerodromes were put at the disposal of the Luftwaffe, and the Bulgarian roads were opened to the Reichswehr.[18] On March 5 the British Goverment broke off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria, pointing out that the Bulgarian Government had facilitated Germany's aim to menace and if necessary, attack Greece. The British Minister left for Istanbul on March 10 with time-bombs placed in the Legation luggage, which exploded in an Istanbul hotel, killing or injuring 22 people. On April 3, the Anglophile butterfly-collector, King Boris, formally inspected the German troops which, three days later, were to march to the vile assault on Greece.

[18] C. Mackenzie: Thumbs down for Bulgaria, in "Hellas" London, February 14, 1944.

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CHAPTER III

MASSACRES OF GREEKS

The historic events described above—events of only sixty years, i.e., of the period during which Bulgaria existed as an independent country—speak eloquently about the perfidious policy which the Bulgarian governments practised on every occasion, not only towards the Greeks, but also towards the Serbs, the British and the French. We are faced with acts which reveal the character of the Bulgarian State and which silence all those who attempt to maintain that Bulgarian policy of today is due to a "clique" of reactionary and fascist politicians. It is an indubitable fact that all those who successively governed Bulgaria and represented the desires and aspirations of the Bulgarian people were continually deceiving their neighbours and showing a perpetual bad faith towards the democracies; they were always devoted to German imperialism whether led by the Kaiser or by Hitler.

Greece especially—and to a great degree Serbia also—has paid for this perfidy of the Bulgarians with the blood of her children, since the end of the 19th century up to the present. The organized mass slaughters of Greek populations by the Bulgarians, form the darkest page in the history of this nation, which in history provided a prototype for Nazi Germany and which has surpassed it in the system and method with which it carries out a policy of extermination of its neighbours. Five times until now, during the last fifty years, Bulgarian brutality towards the Greeks has aroused public opinion of the whole world, horrifying all civilized people.

1. The Period of the Comitadjis (1897-1903)

The "Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization" (O.R.I.M. or I.M.R.O.) i.e., the organization of the comitadjis, was founded in Bulgaria in 1894 by some intellectuals; one of its aims was the terrorisation and extermination of the Greek element in Macedonia, in order to cause the intervention of the Great Powers and make Macedonia autonomous under Bulgar-

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ian auspices. This was and is still considered by the Bulgarians as a transition stage which would lead to Macedonia's definitive annexation to Bulgaria in the same manner as in Eastern Rumelia. From 1897 to 1903 the Bulgarian comitadjis burned to the ground whole villages in Macedonia and exterminated numerous Greek families, or making life impossible for them in extended areas and forcing many Macedonians and Thracians to expatriate themselves. Thus, according to reliable statistics, 336 Greeks were exterminated by comitadjis in only the Province of Monastir (Bitolja) from 1900 to 1903.

2. Massacres in Eastern Rumelia (1906)

The above mentioned executions, sporadic and unorganized as they were, are negligible if compared with the massacres of Greeks in Eastern Rumelia during 1906. These massacres were incited by the Bulgarian State as reprisals for the activity of Greeks guerillas against the cruelties of the Bulgarian comitadjis from 1903 onwards. The days of July 1906 were days of martyrdom for the Greek populations of Varna, Philippoupolis, Pyrgos, Stenimachos, Mesemvria, Kavakli and Anchialos. The Bulgarian mob, raging and armed with iron clubs, axes and knives and protected by the police, burned down the Greek homes, the churches, schools and libraries in those towns. They plundered the Greek shops and destroyed the offices and printing presses of the Greek newspapers "Philippoupolis" and "News of Aimos". They ill-treated and injured Archbishops and Priests. The purely Greek city of Anchialos was set on fire. Of its 994 Greek houses—according to a report by the Bulgarian Minister of Interior Petkov—816 were burned, while its 110 Bulgarian houses suffered no damage at all.[19]

These persecutions of the Greek in Eastern Rumelia aroused such indignation, that Bulgaria's diplomatic agent in Constantinople, Gr. Natsevitch, was obliged to resign; a year after his resignation he published a series of articles in the Bulgarian newspaper "Mir" (July 19, 20, and 21, 1907), which proved that

[19] Athos Romanos: The antihellenic persecutions in Bulgaria (Athens 1906 in Greek), p. 454.

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the events of Eastern Rumelia had been instigated and organized by the Ratso Petrov Government. The Bulgarian Prime Minister himself did not hesitate to declare that, by allowing the persecutions, he "obeyed" the unanimous wish of the Bulgarian people, and that "by the abolition of the Greek communities greater bloodshed had been prevented." "The Greeks," added Petrov, "can in the future, if they wish, go to Bulgarian churches and send their children to Bulgarian schools."[20]

The later King of Bulgaria, Ferdinand, made the following declaration to a committee of outstanding Greeks who, headed by the Greek deputies of Eastern Rumelia, had called on him to beg for his intervention in these massacres and for the cessation of these persecutions:

"I am very sorry, gentlemen," he replied, "for what has happened and because I am forced to tell you that neither I, personally, nor my Government, can intervene on behalf of the Greek element in Bulgaria, nor can we make any efforts for the restitution of the Greek churches and schools; for this would not only mean war on the political parties of my country and especially on the Macedonian party, but would also be in opposition with the opinion of the Bulgarian people."

Owing to these persecutions many Greeks were at that time forced to leave for Greece. They settled in Thessaly, where the names of their settlements (New Anchialos, New Philippoupolis, etc.) indicate up to the present the origin of those who formed them.

3. Massacres of Doxato, etc. (1913)

During the few months of the second Balkan war (June-October 1913) the Bulgarians vented their fury for their defeats upon the defenseless Greek populations in the regions under their occupation. The towns of Serrai, Nigrita and Doxato were destroyed. Most of the inhabitants met a pitiful death. The neighbouring villages also suffered from the most refined brutalities. The massacres, which took place in these three towns showed

[20] Photios, Bishop of Irinoupolis: Official documents (in Greek, Athens 1919), p. 358-454.

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that the Bulgarians had made considerable progress in the art of exterminating non-Bulgarian populations.

4. The Massacres of Eastern Macedonia (1917)

During the first world war, Bulgaria, after deceiving the Allies more than a year, finally joined Germany. When the Bulgarian troops reached Rupel, the Bulgarian Government categorically assured Greece, which at that time was neutral, that her troops would behave in an "absolutely friendly way" towards the Greek populations (note of the Bulgarian Embassy in Athens, dated May 22, 1916) and that "throughout the whole of Eastern Macedonia, Greek sovereignty, personal freedom, personal property and the existing religious conditions would be respected."

How the Bulgarians kept their promise is shown by the report of the Interallied Committee composed of English, French, Serbian and Belgian representatives, published in Paris in 1919 after local investigation. "The committee," says the report, "visited 339 towns and villages out of a total of 493. Before the Bulgarians entered Eastern Macedonia, the population amounted to 305,000. After the end of the war only 235,000 had remained. In the whole of Eastern Macedonia, 32,000 died during this period; of these 30,000 died owing to torture and starvation; 42,000 of the inhabitants were transferred to Bulgaria, and 12,000 of them never returned. . . . We are sure," the report goes on, "that Bulgaria had one aim: that of exterminating the Greek population of Eastern Macedonia. . . ." How can one characterize a country which shows such extreme deceitfulness, which breaks its promises so easily, which violates the rules of International Law and the most elementary principles of International customs, which condemns to death tens of thousands of innocents and does not shrink from using the most barbarous methods when it wants to satisfy its desires, its greediness and its ambition? Suffice it to say that this country is not only dangerous to her neighbours but to the whole of civilized humanity."[21]

[21] E.E.A. Bulgaria and Greece (in Greek, Athens 1943), p. 18-19.

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5. Massacres of Serbs

During the same period, Bulgaria committed similar crimes against the Serbs. Even Todorov, who passes in silence over the brutalities committed against the Greek population, is forced to confess them: "Bulgarian soldiers," he says, "told us of the hardships at the front, of the disheartened mood of the army, of the crimes of Bulgarian officials in occupied Serbian territory, of wholesale murders, robbing and rapes committed by Macedonian comitadjis who were now no more than bandits in Germany's pay."[22]

Three years after, in October 1920, Todorov was sitting in the diplomatic gallery of the Skouptchina (Serbian Parliament) as the first Ambassador to Yugoslavia, after the World War, of the country of murderers, in Belgrade. When he was seen, he relates: "Toma Popovich, a deputy from the Serbian provinces Bulgaria had occupied during the war, turned towards the diplomatic gallery where I sat and shouted: "The presence of a representative of the people who were murdering Serbian citizens a short time ago is an insult to this House. I think he should be shot down in the street.' "[23]

The Serbian deputy was speaking on behalf of the victims of 1917. The Greek and Yugoslav peoples will speak on behalf of the victims of 1941. . . .

[22] Kosta Todorov: Balkan firebrand (Chicago-New York 1943), p. 96.
[23] Ibid., p. 140.

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CHAPTER IV

THE QUESTION OF THE OUTLET TO THE AEGEAN

During the whole period in Bulgaria between the first and the second World War (1919-1939) the Bulgarian demand for a *territorial* outlet to the Aegean is persistently repeated. The problem is briefly as follows. The borders between Greece and Bulgaria after 1918 were fixed by the Treaty of Neuilly (November 27, 1919). According to article 48 of this Treaty, the Allies "undertook the obligation to assure a free *economic* outlet of Bulgaria to the Aegean Sea." After ten months the treaty of Sevres (August 20, 1920) repeated this promise and defined the conditions for this *economic* outlet of Bulgaria in its articles 4-16.

From the day after the signing of the Treaty of Neuilly, Bulgaria started demanding not only the cession of a trade outlet, to which neither the Allies nor Greece had any objection, but the cession of a territorial outlet. After the defeat of Greece in Asia Minor, the Bulgarians thought that they could take advantage of the situation and succeed during the Lausanne conference (1922) in obtaining the recognition of this demand.

1. Trade and Territorial Outlet

"We hoped at this conference," writes Todorov, "to obtain the outlet to the Aegean provided for in the Treaty of Neuilly, but not yet ceded to us. The treaty provided for a *trade* outlet, and the Allies wanted us to accept the use of the harbour of Dedeagatch (Alexandroupolis). But we insisted on a *territorial* outlet—the cession to Bulgaria of a corridor along the railway and full control over the port.

"Our delegation of thirty members was headed by Stamboliski, with myself as second ranking delegate. The evening we arrived in London we held a meeting which Stanciov, our delegate to London, and General Savov also attended. Stanciov had been persuaded in London that Bulgaria should accept a trade outlet and had succeeded in convincing Stamboliski that taking London's advice would ease our whole future political course.

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When Stamboliski announced this at the meeting I flared up.

" 'In that event,' I shouted, 'I renounce my obligations as second delegate. This decision is against the basic interests of the Bulgarian nation.'

"Stamboliski was furious, but Morfov, our chief expert on railways and harbours, rose and said, 'I wish to explain why I agree completely with Todorov.'

" 'Dedeagatch,' Morfov reminded us, 'really had no harbour. Building one would cost a minimum of ten million dollars. Yet, unless we controlled the port in case of the slightest conflict with Greece we could expect to lose our right to its use.'

"Stamboliski turned to me: 'Why didn't you explain it that way? Your ways show that at least you are still a terrorist.'

"Several days later, Venizelos offered to grant us a free zone in Salonica.

" 'As a peasant people,' I answered, 'we prefer a cottage of our own to the best apartment in the mansion of a stranger.' "[24]

The Treaty of Lausanne did not give Bulgaria the "cottage" she wanted.

2. What Greece Offered

Greece never refused Bulgaria an economic outlet to the Aegean, as distinguished from a territorial outlet. As Todorov confirms, at the Lausanne Conference in 1923 Greece offered to Bulgaria a Free Zone in the port of Salonica which would afford Bulgaria free transit of goods to and from the country. She also declared herself ready to entrust to an international administration the port of Dedeagatch in Western Thrace together with the railway that connected it with Bulgaria by the roundabout way through the Turkish city of Adrianople. She also offered to build up the facilities of the port and give all the necessary guarantees for the freedom of Bulgarian commerce. Bulgaria refused both offers. During the same period the Yugoslavs were enjoying Free Zone privileges in the Greek port of Salonica, amply proving that such arrangements could be satisfactorily worked out by well intentioned neighbours. In a further attempt to satisfy Bulgarian demands, the Greek Gov-

[24] Kosta Todorov: op. cit. (Chicago-New York), p. 174-176.

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ernment in October 1925 initiated direct negotiations with Sofia. The negotiations were under way when a Free Zone was created in Salonica for the purpose of giving "the Balkan states" as the Greek Government explained, "and especially Bulgaria," access to the Aegean Sea, under regulations which will allow any country to use the port of Salonica for the shipment of goods, incoming and outgoing, without restriction as to duties, rights of seizure or of search. "Nothing ever came of this. Bulgaria remained adamant."[25]

3. The Bulgarian Arguments

The arguments which the Bulgarian Government on each occasion put forward in order to support its demand for a territorial outlet can be summed up as follows: 1) The Danube cannot be used by Bulgaria as a transport way as it is not navigable during the whole year. 2) The two large Bulgarian ports on the Black Sea, Varna and Burgas, the first 143 miles and the second 120 miles from the Bosphorus, are useless, as Turkey controls the Dardanelles. Dedeagatch on the Aegean Sea should be given over to Bulgaria as it belongs geographically to her and consequently also commercially. Bulgarian economic activity is seriously hindered without an outlet to the Aegean Sea.

But what are the facts in relation with these arguments? The freezing of the Danube has never been considered in the past as an insuperable obstacle for commercial movement. Bulgarian policy has made the river useless for navigation in certain parts, by considering it rather as a military boundary than as a commercial route. The best proof is the fact that only a few years ago, Bulgaria allowed Rumania to build a bridge over the river, while for a long time her military leaders objected to it. The Danube has been for a very long time one of the most busy routes of Central Europe. For practical purposes it is navigable during the whole year, as it is neither difficult nor expensive to keep the river lines open and to clean the harbours of ice.

The second argument, that the two large ports of Bulgaria,

[25] Ed. Capps: Greece and her neighbors. In the collection: "Greece of tomorrow" (New York 1943), p. 31, 32.

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Varna and Burgas, on the Black Sea are useless, because Turkey controls the Bosphorous, has no practical value. It is universally known that, according to the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 the Dardanelles are open to international mercantile navigation. This free passage of all foreign mercantile vessels was again guaranteed by the Treaty of Montreux. No one can accept the Bulgarian contention, when Rumania and Soviet Russia, which are much more important countries, are using the ports of the Black Sea and have never contended that their harbours are useless owing to the Turkish occupation of the Dardanelles.

The allegation that Alexandroupolis (Dedeagatch), a port on the Aegean Sea, near the Greek-Turkish border belongs to Bulgaria is absolutely untrue. Bulgaria occupied Western Thrace and Dedeagatch from 1912 to 1918. During this period she never undertook the construction of a road or a railway line connecting the port with her inner provinces. She did not even care to make repairs. The truth is that the outlets to the Black Sea and the ports on the Danube are sufficient for the small commercial needs of the self-sufficient Bulgarian nation.

4. The Character of Bulgarian Economy

Bulgaria has never needed the Greek-Aegean littoral to ensure the ingress and egress of her trade. More than eighty per cent of her population is engaged in agriculture. From the point of view of foodstuffs Bulgaria is one of the few virtually self-sufficient nations in Europe. In sharp contrast to Greece, Bulgaria exports foodstuffs. Cereals and their derivatives constitute 70% of her total exports. Livestock raising forms also an important part of Bulgaria's economy and her resources in this respect are larger than Rumania's economy and Yugoslavia's. Livestock figures in ever increasing numbers in Bulgaria's foreign trade. Its products—tobacco, dairy produce, livestock and cereals—are largely exported to Central Europe. Even in the normal year 1928 before the dislocation of commerce in Europe, 50% of the exports moved to Austria, Germany, Italy and Hungary with an additional 8% to Greece and 4.7% to Turkey. Of the rest, 5.5% went to France, 4.2% to Belgium and 1.9% to Great Britain. Bulgaria's per capita imports are smaller

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than those of any country in Europe, except Russia. Machinery, metal goods and war materials comprised the bulk of her imports and practically all of these came from Central Europe.[26]

According to the Bulgarian statistics of 1919 only 3.85% of her imports and 6.82% of her exports passed through the ports of the Aegean Sea (during the period 1912-1918). The conditions of Bulgaria's foreign trade explains why most of it passed through Bulgaria's ten ports of the Danube and the rest through her eight ports on the Black Sea. Five of the river ports and two of the sea ports are served by railroads. Bulgaria's railway system runs east-west and not north-south. While under Bulgarian administration from 1912 to 1918, the Aegean coast line was neglected, and indeed was in no way used as an economic outlet, as Bulgaria never bothered to connect it with her main railway system. If more proof is needed of the non-essentiality of direct sea routes for Bulgaria, it should be noted that, as of June 30, 1939, her mercantile fleet was the smallest in the world, comprising 14 vessels of an aggregate tonnage of 17,476 tons.[27]

5. Political Aspirations

There is no doubt that the pre-war demands of Bulgaria for a territorial outlet to the Aegean had no economic basis, and were a pretext for territorial expansion. Such an expansion would have been doubly injurious to Greece; in the first place it would lead to ethnological sacrifices for her, as it would mean the ceding to Bulgaria of a region exclusively inhabited by Greeks and Moslems. Not one Bulgarian was living before the war in Western Thrace, as all Bulgarians had been repatriated to Bulgaria according to the Agreement for mutual exchange of populations. Thus, of a total population of 304,171 there are only 16,740 Moslems and 1,061 orthodox slavophones in Western Thrace in 1940. In the second place the common land frontiers between Greece and Turkey would be abolished. This is not considered desirable either by Greece or by Turkey, and recent history has proved how right both countries were in insisting on a common frontier.

[26] Ed. Capps: Greece and her neighbors, p. 31.
[27] Ed. Capps: Greece and her neighbors, p. 30-31.

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CHAPTER V

IS THERE A QUESTION OF MINORITIES?

It must be pointed out from the beginning that there is no other country in Europe with fewer minorities (national, linguistic and religious) than Greece, with her territory as of October 1940. In consequence, national or even autonomistic claims at the expense of even a small part of the country are not only manifestations of a desire for plunder or of foolishness but also an impudent challenge to the notions of International Justice.

Nevertheless the Bulgarians have never ceased demanding either Macedonia or Trace, or both, or creating and supporting pseudo-autonomistic movements as a cover for their conquering dispositions. A proof of the lack of foundation to this demand lies in internationally recognized and official statistics.

1. Greeks in Bulgaria

The question of minorities between Greece and Bulgaria naturally has two aspects: a) Greek minorities in Bulgaria and b) Bulgarian minorities in Greece. According to Turkish statistics, at the end of the 19th century, there were approximately 130,000 Greeks in old Bulgaria and in Eastern Rumelia, with prosperous communities, which led in every progressive and civilizing movement in these regions. However, owing to Bulgarian restrictions, persecutions and forced emigration, not only did the Greek population show no increase but on the contrary it decreased, with the result that, at the time of the Balkan wars, it totalled only 100,000.

To these 100,000 should be added 94,240 Greeks of Thrace and 7,260 of the northern part of the province of Salonica, which were given to Bulgaria by the Treaty of Bucharest (1913). Thus at the end of the Balkan wars about 200,000 Greeks were living in Bulgaria. But this situation did not last very long. After the end of World War I, Thrace was given to Greece, and thus 82,680 Greeks returned to their Fatherland. Moreover, 54,127 Greeks willingly emigrated to Greece from Bulgaria, bringing

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the total to 136,807. Thus, during the first twenty years of the twentieth century about 70,000 Greeks still remained under Bulgarian rule.

2. Reciprocal Greco-Bulgarian Emigration and Greco-Turkish Exchange of Populations

During the same period a migratory movement of Bulgarians in Greece returning to Bulgaria began. Thus between 1912 and 1918 about 15,000 emigrated from Macedonia. After the Treaty of Neuilly in 1919 and according to the Greco-Bulgarian agreement of November 27, 1919 concerning voluntary emigration, 53,180 Bulgarians left Macedonia and 33,620 Western Thrace (where they had been settled in 1913) for Bulgaria. To sum up, 101,880 Bulgarians had left Greece for Bulgaria from 1912 to 1922. It should be pointed out that this voluntary emigration was carried out under the supervision of an International Committee. The emigrants were indemnified for the estates they were leaving behind and all the Greeks and Bulgarians who had emigrated after 1900 were also paid an indemnity.

The above exchanges of populations and emigrations, by which the Greek character of Macedonia and Thrace was reinforced were not the only ones. Between 1912 and 1918, 15,000 Bulgarians, 125,000 Moslems and 8,000 Jews emigrated willingly from Macedonia. After the catastrophe of Asia Minor and following the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) which imposed a forced exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece, 383,000 Moslems emigrated from Macedonia. Thus from 1912 up to 1925, 508,000 Moslems, 101,800 Bulgarians and 8,000 Jews left Macedonia, making the total of foreigners who left the country 617,800.

During the same period, 5,000 Greeks who emigrated from Serbia, 3,000 Greeks from Northern Epirus and 76,000 Greeks from South Russia and the Caucasus settled in Macedonia, according to the clause of the Treaty of Lausanne about the exchange of populations (1923-1925); to these must be added 446,000 Greeks coming from Asia Minor who were also settled in Macedonia and 66,400 who were settled in Thrace. Taking

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into consideration the fact that part of the 54,127 Greeks who emigrated from Bulgaria settled in Macedonia and Thrace, we have a total of 600,000 Greeks settling in Macedonia and Thrace from 1906-1925. It thus becomes obvious that all foreigners who left Northern Greece, were replaced by Greeks.

The above changes are briefly tabulated below.

GREEKS UNDER BULGARIAN DOMINATION

1878-1913	Old Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia	130,000
1913-1918	Thrace and part of Salonica province	101,500
	Total	231,500

EXTERMINATED OR RETURNED TO GREECE

1878-1913	Massacres and persecutions of Greeks	30,000
1918	Cession of Western Thrace to Greece	82,680
1900-1922	Voluntary emigration	54,127
	Total	166,807

Consequently about 65,000 Greeks still remained under Bulgarian domination.

EMIGRATION OF GREEKS TO NORTHERN GREECE

1912-1918	From Serbia to Macedonia	5,000
1912-1918	From Northern Epirus to Macedonia	3,000
1912-1918	From Southern Russia, etc. to Macedonia	76,000
1900-1922	From Bulgaria to Macedonia and Thrace	54,127
1923-1925	From Asia Minor to Macedonia and Thrace	512,400
	Total	650,527

FOREIGN EMIGRATION FROM NORTHERN GREECE

1912-1918	Bulgarians from Macedonia	15,000
1912-1918	Moslems from Macedonia	125,000
1912-1918	Jews from Macedonia	8,000
1919-1922	Bulgarians from Macedonia	53,180
1919-1922	Bulgarians from Thrace	33,620
1923-1924	Moslems from Macedonia	383,000
	Total	617,800

3. THE COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE

According to the 1928 census, the composition of the popula-

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tion of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace from the linguistic point of view was as follows, taken by province:

EASTERN MACEDONIA

Slavophones		*Total Population*	
Prov. of Drama	4,114	Prov. of Drama	111,572
Prov. of Serres	7,715	Prov. of Serres	182,710
Prov. of Kavalla	23	Prov. of Kavalla	119,140
	11,852		413,422

WESTERN THRACE

Slavophones		*Total Population*	
Prov. of Evros	520	Prov. of Evros	122,730
Prov. of Rodopi	541	Prov. of Rodopi	180,441
	1,061		303,171

Out of the 303,171 inhabitants of Western Thrace, 16,740 slav-speaking Moslems (Pomaks) together with about 103,000 Turks had not emigrated according to the agreement concerning the exchange of populations, as a counter-balance for the Greeks of Constantinople (etablis) who remained there. Thus, of a total population of 716,593 of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace during 1928, 586,940 were Greeks, 103,000 Turks, 16,740 slav-speaking Moslems and 12,913 slav-speaking Christians. Taking into consideration that these slav-speaking Greeks (their children already speak Greek and attend Greek schools, serve in the Greek army, and fought well during the wars of 1916-1922 and during the recent war in Albania) remained in Greece even after the voluntary Greek-Bulgarian exchange of 1919, while those having a Bulgarian national conscience left, it would be erroneous and inaccurate to consider them as Bulgarians.

4. THE OPINION OF THE YUGOSLAVS OF THE LEFT

A characteristic declaration about the same problem was made by Dr. Smodlaka, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Yugoslav Government of National Liberation (Tito) to the correspondent of the "New York Times" on April 10, 1944. Dr. Smodlaka, in proclaiming the necessity of forming a Balkan Federation

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and an autonomous and Federal Macedonia, questions outside the scope of the present study, pointed out that his proposed federal democracy should be composed of the Yugoslav and Bulgarian parts of Macedonia only; Greek Macedonia, whose composition is purely Greek was to be excepted.

"The great bone of contention between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria was the status of Macedonia," according to Dr. Smodlaka. "I believe that the best solution to the problem is to give Macedonia full autonomy within the federal state. That would end the Yugoslav-Bulgarian dispute. *I refer, naturally, only to slav Macedonia. Greek Macedonia belongs to Greece and is a part of Greece.*"

5. The Composition of the Population of Greece

The composition of the population of Greece was as follows during 1928, according to figures issued by the International Refugee Settlement Commission:

	1920		*1928*	
	Population	*%*	*Population*	*%*
Greeks	4,470,000	80.75	5,822,000	93.83
Turks	770,000	13.91	103,000	1.66
Slavophones	139,000	2.51	82,000	1.32
Albanians	18,000	0.32	20,000	0.32
Jews	65,000	1.17	70,000	1.13
Armenians	1,000	0.02	35,000	0.56
Foreign Nationalities	73,000	1.32	73,000	1.18
	5,536,000	100.00	6,205,000*	100.00

As shown in the above official table, only 1.32% of the total population of Greece are slav-speaking people and of these a great part has definitely a Greek national conscience. To allege that there exists a minority problem in Greece would be, to say the least, untrue. According to the estimation by the French

* According to the 1940 census the population of Greece amounts to 7,350,000 inhabitants who, in the whole of Greece, amounted to 81,984 according to the 1928 census, when the slav-speaking Christians in Central and Western Macedonia are added (69,071), according to the census of the above mentioned year.

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specialist Duparc,[28] the national, linguistic and religious minorities in Greece, formed in 1925, only 4% of the total population of the country, while in Bulgaria they formed 15%, in Yugoslavia 25.4% and in Rumania 33.3%. Thus Greece is ethnologically the most homogeneous country in Europe.

As Mr. H. Morgenthau, who was the first chairman of the Refugee Settlement Commission in Greece, created in 1923 by the League of Nations, writes—"The first of Greece's gains from the refugee influx from Turkey is a new national unity. . . . The compensating gain lies in the new geographical unity of the race. Practically all the Greeks now live in one unified area on the mainland of the Balkan Peninsula and upon those Aegean islands peopled by them from the earliest historical times. Not only have the Greeks been concentrated on this area naturally theirs, but practically all the alien intruders have been removed from it. The Turks and Bulgarians, whose presence in Macedonia and Thrace has for the last century kept alive the intolerable 'Macedonian Question,' have all removed to their several countries and have left Macedonia purely Greek."[29]

[28] Fouque Duparc: Le protection des minorites (Paris, 1925).

[29] Henry Morgenthau: An International Drama (chapter: Looking ahead, p. 270-271).

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CHAPTER VI

THE BULGARIANS IN GREECE (1941-1944)

Even before the final collapse of Greek resistance in southern Greece and Crete, Bulgarian troops following in the rear of the German forces invaded Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, whose heroic resistance had ceased. This invasion was permitted by the Germans, as a reward for the services rendered by the Bulgarians to the Axis, in allowing their country to become a base of operations for the German attack against Greece and Yugoslavia. The occupation of Greek territories by the Bulgarians, which started on April 23, 1941, was carried out without a declaration of war on Greece, and the invasion and occupation of Southern Serbia was carried out when the pact of "eternal friendship" between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria was still in force. In June 1941 the Bulgarians took over from the German garrisons the Greek Islands of Thasos and Samothraki.

1. Individual Massacres and Plunders

Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace (except the province of Evros), were occupied by the Bulgarian regular army, which immediately started robbing, destroying, plundering, despoiling, raping, murdering and committing various sacrilegious acts. Their behaviour during the first period, was the behaviour of irregular bands of brigands, delighting in individual massacre and crime with two main purposes: first, to satisfy their hate; and second, to plunder for their own personal enrichment.

2. Legislative and Police Measures of Extermination

When the occupation was completed, the legal foundations for a systematic extermination of the inhabitants (amounting to about 720,000 of whom about 13,000 were Slavophones) and the ethnological alteration of the regions were laid. The most important of these measures are the following:

The municipal, communal, police and judicial authorities were replaced by Bulgarians imported from Bulgaria.

The compulsory use of the Bulgarian language was imposed

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not only as the official language of the authorities, but it was also enforced in private conversations, under the threat of heavy punishments.

The inhabitants were ordered to change their names into Bulgarian-sounding ones by adding the endings -ev or -ov.

The closing down of all the Greek schools was ordered and the teachers were forced to leave.

All Greek books were confiscated and destroyed.

The inviolability of the home was abolished, and houses were subject to search at any time of day or night.

The unlimited settlement of Bulgarians transported from the interior of Bulgaria in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace was legislatively sponsored.

A systematic persecution of the Church was started and the use of the Bulgarian language in the Holy Service was imposed.

The most important churches of the towns and of the villages were taken over by priests from Bulgaria who began officiating in them while the Greek bishops and clergymen were expelled, arrested or imprisoned, etc.

All young men were called up for hard labor.

Private fortunes were confiscated and taxes were imposed equal to 1/3 of the personal property or real estate; expropriations were ordered supposedly in the public interest.

All scientists and all members of liberal professions, bankers, etc., were deported.

Mass deportations of the remaining population were carried out and all those deported were compelled to sign a declaration, saying they were leaving of their own will, that they were surrendering all their rights to return back to their native country, and, finally, that they donated all their wealth to the Bulgarian state, etc.[80]

3. Organized Massacres of 1941

These measures, however, were considered insufficient by the Bulgarian political and military authorities, for the achievement

[80] Protest memorandum of the Committee of Macedonians and Thracians in Athens (September 1941) handed to the German and Italian occupation authorities.

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of their object, i.e., the extermination of the populations of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the Bulgarization of those remaining. To complete their task, they organized wholesale massacres of the population (September 28 and 29, 1941). The plans of these massacres, drawn up by the Bulgarian state, were made at least three months before their execution. Already from the beginning of July many Bulgarian mayors and government officials were replaced by new ones. A large number of teachers and schoolmistresses were sent back to Bulgaria. In the second half of September numerous Comitadjis arrived and rifles were distributed to the newly arrived Bulgarian civilians in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace; they started spreading rumours about a rising in Bulgaria. Bulgarian agents started touring the towns and villages, inviting the Greeks to make a common stand against the Bulgarian government. Many of these agents were apparently quoting a "secret" Bulgarian radio station, saying that the rising was due to take place on September 29 and that "the day of liberation of the oppressed peoples from their own treacherous governments and from their foreign tyrants had come."

The Greeks, suspecting something, did not attempt to rise. This did not deter the Bulgars. The persons spreading the rumours, were at the same time the organizers and the executors of the massacres en masse which began on the 28th and the 29th of September and which continued during the first days of October. It is impossible to describe these nights of St. Bartholomew. Thousands of men, women and children were shot in groups, and massacred after suffering horrible tortures. Only in Doxato (the tragic Doxato, which had also suffered at the hands of the Bulgars in 1913)—1,200 persons were massacred. Drama, Kavalla, Serres, Sidirokastron, Prosotsani, Philippi, Fotolivos, Hormista, Neos Skopos, Poroya, Monastirakion, Rodopolis, Megalokampos and many other boroughs and villages were transformed into places of martyrdom and death for the Greeks. The massacres were carried out by the regular Bulgarian army supported by comitadjis; in many cases, Bulgarian planes took part in these savage operations, setting whole villages on fire or machine

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gunning from a low level the inhabitants who fled panic-stricken. Over 25,000 men, women and children were massacred during those terrible days. . . . No town, no borough or village remained without victims.

4. Economic Spoliation and Undernourishment

These massacres caused a wave of indignation and protest among civilized nations and the Bulgarians were obliged to proceed with their plan of extermination of a population of about 720,000 by a more cautious but not less inhuman methods; the method of economic destruction and undernourishment were resorted to. Thus the Greeks were virtually forbidden to work. Their property was alienated under the pretext of public-utility works. Taxation for them was especially heavy. Taxes were collected with heavy fines in kind and the tax payers were obliged to give to the Bulgarian state all their belongings in place of money. What is even worse, forced labour was imposed upon persons up to 45. All those mobilized for this purpose were transported far from their homes; the food given them was execrable. . . . However, the most effective measure of extermination is that recently imposed by the Bulgarians upon the Greek inhabitants, through systematic undernourishment.[31]

5. The Dilemma of Nationality

The middle of June 1942 a Bulgarian law was published according to which, among other things, it was decreed that all Greeks not of Bulgarian origin, who, on the day this law comes into power, are living in the newly liberated territories, become Bulgarians, except if they want to retain their present nationality; in the latter eventuality, they must declare their desire of remaining Greeks at the latest until April 1, 1943; after the expiration of this term they will be deported outside the borders of the kingdom. By this law the Bulgarian Government sought to expel from the occupied Greek territories as many Greek inhabitants as possible. These Greeks, leaving under abnormal

[31] Appeal of the Committee of Macedonians and Thracians in Athens (October 1942) handed to the German and Italian occupation authorities.

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conditions, were naturally forced to sell their property and estates at very low prices to the Bulgarian colonists, if by chance they had not already been confiscated. As a result, in addition to the massacres, the plunders and confiscations, and the other oppressive measures, this law—which was finally cancelled before the term expired—contributed to the increase of the wave of refugees pouring from the Bulgarian occupied regions into those occupied by the Germans.

6. Settling of Bulgarian Colonists

The sole object of all these oppressive measures was the extermination of the Greek element with the purpose of changing the purely Greek ethnological character of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. This policy was further promoted by the settlement of Bulgarian colonists in these Greek regions. Especially from the beginning of 1942 a systematic immigration of Bulgarian families began. Many Bulgarian families settled in Doxato, in Drama, in Kavalla, in Alexandroupolis, etc. It should be observed that the newly arrived families were established either in houses abandoned by their Greek owners (who had previously been killed, ejected from them, or forced to emigrate)—or in houses already inhabited by Greeks who were thrown out into the streets without even being allowed to take something with them.[82]

7. Results of this Bulgarian Policy

It is estimated that during the first year of occupation of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace by the Bulgars (April-December 1941), 30,000 men, women and children were massacred; 40,000 men from the age of 18 to 45 were transported as hostages, or were politically mobilized and sent to the interior of Bulgaria, where they were thrown into forced labour camps under ghastly conditions; 160,000 finally escaped to German-occupied Greece, naked and penniless. To sum up the total results, until the middle of 1943, one-third of the population of Eastern

[82] Protest of the Committee of Macedonians and Thracians in Athens (November 1942) handed to the German and Italian occupation authorities.

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Macedonia and Thrace was either exterminated or driven away.

8. New Regions Given to Bulgaria (1943 and 1944)

As if the sufferings of the Greek population of 720,000 in Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia were not enough, the Germans, during the summer of 1943, ceded to the Bulgarians a new zone west of the river Struma. The limits of this zone, of the extension of Bulgarian occupation, were Eidomeni on the Greco-Yugoslav border, the river Axios (Vardar) up to the Axiopolis bridge, and from there the railway line leading into the province of Kilkis until the railway station of Aspros of the Axiochori community; from there these limits continue southwest to the Philadelphia railway station (Salonica-Serres line); thence to Phaliron and over the Asvestochori and the Chortiatis heights; from there they run to the Sedes spa and then to the sea near Cape Epanomi. The communities Melantion, Agionerion of the Kilkis province and the communities Grademborion, Nesharouda, Oreokastron, Nea Efkarpia, Asvestochorion, Hortiatis, Mantsaridon, Kato Scholarion and Epanomi around Salonica, remain outside the Bulgarian zone.

Finally, at the beginning of February 1944, the Bulgarians militarily occupied three more provinces of Central and Western Macedonia, the provinces of Edessa, Kastoria and Florina, which until then were under German occupation. Bulgaria thus occupied in Greece the following Greek prefectures: Rodopi (western Thrace), Kavalla, Drama, Serrai (eastern Macedonia), the northern part of the prefecture of Salonica and the prefecture of Pella (central Macedonia), and the prefecture of Florina (western Macedonia). This extension of Bulgarian occupation was made despite the warnings to Bulgaria by Russia and Great Britain to evacuate the Greek and Yugoslav territories she occupied and whose population she tortured, in order to give a real example of her "pacific" intensions which, she claims, always inspire her.

9. Bulgarian Cynicism and the Allies

The whole tragedy of the Greek people and the perfidy of the Bulgarian people, was summed up as follows by the new Prime

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Minister of Bulgaria, Bozhilov, in December 1943 in an official statement made by him. "To the 7,000,000 of our population, 1,300,000 of the same nationality have been added (he means the 720,000 Greeks of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the 580,000 inhabitants of South Serbia), according to the principle proclaimed by the Great Powers." We doubt if another example of such cynicism exists in history.

The Great Powers have often expressed their opinion on the odius Bulgarian crimes. "The provinces given over to Bulgaria," states the report of the London International Assembly, "are among the richest of Greece. They have always ethnologically been purely Greek. . . . The handing over of about a million Greeks to a people with primitive instincts, noted for acts of terrorism, will undoubtedly rank among the greatest crimes of national-socialism."[38]

In addition, on March 24, 1943, the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, Mr. Richard K. Law, made the following statement in the House of Commons: "The Bulgarian Government is making systematic attempts to nationalize the Greek provinces of Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace and many inhabitants are being expelled to make room for Bulgarian immigrants. The British Government regards as null and void any legislation or other acts by the Bulgarian Government which are aimed at Bulgarizing Greek territory, which they covet. All these measures of expropriation, for which the Bulgarian Government must be held responsible, will have to be undone at the end of the war."

[38] Reports of the London International Assembly: Europe in Chains (London 1943), p. 88.

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CHAPTER VII

WHAT BULGARIA HAS OFFERED THE AXIS

Of all the so-called satellites of Germany, Bulgaria has offered the greatest services to the Axis. These go back to the period long befor the war, when the Bulgar's prepared the tragic military situation which was created for the Allies in the Eastern Mediterranean during the second year of the war. Those prewar services of Bulgaria towards the Axis were summed up in a really epigrammatic way by Prime Minister Bogdan Filov, speaking on November 19, 1941 in the Sobranie: "Bulgaria," said Filov, "is a small nation but, even so, her action doubtlessly wrecked the much-discussed plan of the Balkan bloc. *It was because of Bulgaria's firm attitude that this Bloc never materialized,* and thus a scheme the object of which was the formation of hundreds of divisions to fight against the Germans was foiled. This fact emphatically proves that Bulgaria followed this policy in order to maintain harmony among the Axis Powers. Today we stand firmly at the side of the axis."

This statement of Premier Filov, who is now a member of the Regency Council, sheds full light on the deeper causes of Bulgaria's refusal to participate in the Balkan-Entente, notwithstanding the repeated invitations addressed to her. Bulgaria was consciously playing for many years the role of separator and underminer of Balkan unity, working with all the means in her power to make the Balkans an easy prey for the Axis.

1. The Upset of the Strategical Equilibrium in the Balkans

After the declaration of war in September 1939 and the Italian attack on Greece in October 1940, whose heroic and victorious resistance upset the whole time table of Axis conquests towards the south and the east, Bulgaria on March 1, 1941 put at Germany's disposal her territory, her communications, her airfields, all her state machinery, her resources, and made herself a base of operations for the German attack against

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Greece, which had already been fighting for four months previously, and Yugoslavia. The results of this treachery at the expense of Greece, Yugoslavia, Great Britain and finally Russia—to whom Bulgaria owes her freedom—are well known. Yugoslavia, unprepared and betrayed by the Regent Prince Paul and the Premier, Chvetcovitch, collapsed in a few days, leaving the centre of the northern Greek frontiers uncovered. Greece, with her eight million inhabitants, was smashed under the bulk of the war machine of two brigand states of 120,000,000 inhabitants. Great Britain saw Germany reaching Crete, and was facing the danger of losing the Suez Canal. In June finally, Russia suffered an unprovoked attack from Germany, an attack which the Reich would not have dared to undertake if the Balkans were free. In this manner the treason of Bulgaria upset the whole military equilibrium in Europe and Eastern Mediterranean, since it facilitated the German adventure into Russia.

2. The Indictment of a Communist Leader

On January 7, 1941, the famous Bulgarian Communist, G. Dimitrov, known, among other things, for his fearless attitude during the Reichstag trial, addressed an appeal from the Moscow radio station to the Bulgarian people. The major part of the appeal was published in the newspaper "Progres Egyptien"[34] of Cairo. Dimitrov's appeal is a bitter indictment against the Bulgarian leaders; it invites the Bulgarian people and the Bulgarian army to rise in common against them and to drive the Germans out of the country while there was still time for it.

Dimitrov has the following to say of his compatriots' crimes:

a) Bulgaria was turned into a German base of operations for the pursuit of a criminal war against the liberal Nations and especially against the Soviet Union.

b) Bulgaria allowed the Germans to strengthen their situation and to install themselves as rulers in the country.

c) Bulgaria ceded to the Germans the town of Varna, her naval base.

d) Bulgaria accepted that her army be put under the control

[34] G. Dimitrov: Mon Pays traverse une crise. In "Progres Egyptien" 19.1; 44.

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of Germans, who appear as "experts," and are, in fact, nothing else but Nazi agents.

e) Bulgaria accepted that her forces stationed in Yugoslavia take part together with the German hordes in operations against the Yugoslavian Liberation Army.

f) As a result, Bulgaria became a tributary to the Reich and an accomplice in Hitler's criminal war.

g) Bulgaria noisily and triumphantly declared war on Great Britain and the U.S.A. on December 12, 1941.

h) Bulgaria believed she could be assured of the support of the Allies if, at the very last moment, she made changes in her foreign policy.

i) The Bulgarian leaders were doing everything possible to continue their present policy with German force and German support.

To complete this list one should add the treason towards Yugoslavia, whom Bulgaria robbed of the whole of Southern Serbia, though bound to her by racial ties and by a pact of "eternal friendship"; the seizure of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace from Greece; the sending of Bulgarian troops in these Greek regions; and, in general, the crimes against the populations of these occupied foreign regions.[35]

Bulgaria served during the whole war as a first class military centre for the concentration of German troops and supplies—a fact which should not be forgotten. The reason is easy to understand: as long as the regions from Burgas to the Black Sea and up to the Albanian frontiers remained under Bulgarian control, Bulgaria was an excellent base, whence the Germans could quickly send military reinforcements to Albania in case of an allied landing there.

[35] Cf. G. Alexandre: A propos de la crise Bulgare, in the "Le Progres Egyptien" January 23, 1944.

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CHAPTER VIII

EFFORTS OF BULGARIA TO MAKE AN APOLOGY FOR HER ACTS

When we speak of the responsibilities of the Bulgarian people, we are not simple-minded enough to believe that, at various times in Bulgaria, small groups or isolated persons did not exist who disapproved of the policy of the Bulgarian state; nor do we believe that there are no Bulgarians opposing the collaboration of their nation with the Germans. In addition to Dimitrov, and generally the Communists, there exist in Bulgaria proper, and outside her boundaries, personalities who, either from tradition or cleverness, have supported and continue to support the necessity of an orientation of the policy of their country towards the Allies.

Among the most important representatives of this tendency is surely Kosta Todorov, who is now in the United States of America (February 1944, in London). Todorov was a comitadji, terrorist and soldier and served as undersecretary for Foreign Affairs of the Stamboliski government and ambassador. In 1943, Todorov published his autobiography in English—a biography of a man of action, whose life covers the whole events of the Balkans and Europe of the 20th century—under the title: "Balkan Firebrand. The autobiography of a rebel, soldier and statesman."[36]

1. The Book of Kosta Todorov

This work is from many points of view very interesting. It does not lack literary value, but it especially has a fine political importance. It has all the qualifications of a novel, but was surely not written in order to make its writer famous as a novelist. It was written in order to justify, under the fascinating shape of an adventurous life-story the point of view of the dissenting Bulgarians—the so-called "Free Bulgarians." And this is

[36] Kosta Todorov: Balkan firebrand. The autobiography of a rebel, soldier and statesman (Chicago-New York 1943).

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simply that the Bulgarian people are not responsible for the crimes of their governments, from 1913 and thereafter. According to Todorov's point of view, those responsible for 1913 (attack on the Balkan allies), and for 1941 (alliance with the Axis) are the comitadjis, King Ferdinand and his governments, and King Boris and his governments. Only once—according to Todorov—was the Bulgarian people ruled by a government representing their true feelings: after the defeat of 1918, during the first and the second Stamboliski governments. Stamboliski sought a sincere understanding with Yugoslavia, and paid with his life for his efforts. He was assassinated (1923) by the comitadjis upon the orders of Italy, which wanted to prevent a Serbo-Bulgarian entente.

Todorov describes the assassination of Stamboliski as follows:

"The official version put out by the Tsankov government claimed that Stamboliski had been killed in southern Bulgaria during a struggle between the Sofia troops and armed peasants who had attacked the army automobile in which he was driven to Sofia under arrest. At the Quai d'Orsay, Peretti de la Rocca showed me the report of the French minister in Sofia, telling what had really happened. Piecing this together with other information I gathered later, I was finally able to reconstruct the whole gruesome story.

"During the coup d'etat in Sofia, Stamboliski was in his native village of Slavovitza, guarded by a platoon of loyal soldiers and peasants. When a detachment of troops arrived to arrest him, his men drove it off. Stamboliski then ordered that rockets be sent up—a prearranged signal for armed peasants to join him. Several thousand men arrived, but most of them were unarmed, although a few months earlier they had been furnished with all available rifles in anticipation of a possible army coup d'etat. Officers in the conspiracy had convinced the gullible Minister of War, Muraviev, that the guns should be sent to an arsenal for cleaning and repair; and on his order most of the peasants had turned their rifles to the army. No more than eight hundred of those who joined Stamboliski in Slovovitza carried guns and ammunition.

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"With these limited forces, Stamboliski moved on Tatar-Pazarjik, hoping to rally the peasants to his support. Regular troops moved out of the town against him, were defeated, and withdrew. Then Stamboliski repeated Daskalov's mistake in the uprising of September 1918; he halted his peasants outside the town until morning. During the night, artillery arrived from the nearby city of Plovdiv, and the next day the peasants fled after resisting briefly. Stamboliski, left alone with his brother Vasili, managed to reach the village of Goliak, but was seized there and brought back to Tatar-Pazarjik, which was under the command of Colonel Vasiliev, his former schoolmate.

"Some hours later several automobiles arrived from the capital filled with Todor Alexandrov's Macedonians, commanded by a Captain Harlakov and a professional assassin named Velichko. Harlakov produced an order from the Italian agent, Ivan Volkov, as Minister of War, and Vasiliev handed Stamboliski over to the Macedonians. They drove him back to his villa in Slavovitza, where they tortured him sadistically while he pleaded in vain for a quick death.

"Velichko cut off his right arm and cried, 'Here is the hand which signed the Nish Agreement with the Serbs!'

"When at last Stamboliski was dead, Captain Harlakov and his men pillaged the villa and stole all the belongings of the murdered leader. They dismembered the corpse and buried the parts in several spots along the banks of the Maritsa River."[37]

From this account one can make many conclusions about the customs of Bulgarian politicians and about the strength of Stamboliski.

2. The Two Stamboliski Governments

There can be no doubt about the sincerity of Stamboliski's efforts. It is, nevertheless, noteworthy that this sincerity was not shared by his immediate collaborators. In addition, it is also difficult not to express astonishment as to how the Bulgarian people, since their appearance in history and since the time they created an independent state in modern times, could be

[37] Kosta Todorov: Balkan firebrand (Chicago-New York 1943), p. 191-192.

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governed only once in 60 whole years by politicians truly representing their tendencies, while all their other governments supposedly had nothing to do with their true feelings. No other people, and no other defender of a people would dare to support such a thing.

Todorov's contention does not only provoke astonishment; it also provokes doubts. How is it possible that the Bulgarian people, when they finally obtained the only Government in their whole history which corresponded to their wishes, how could they, it is repeated, permit its fall under the murderous blows of a handful of criminals? Whence did the enemies of this true government derive their power? Why was this government not defended by the Bulgarian people if they were unanimous in their approval of it,

But there is also something else: Todorov confesses that in the first Stamboliski government there were men who were responsible for the policy of Bulgaria, during World War I, since they held portfolios during the 1912-1918 period. In the second Stamboliski government—the so-called pure one—there were "five ministers who through fear of the Macedonians, now opposed Stamboliski's foreign policy. Tomov himself, now (1922) Minister of War, continued to help the I.M.R.O., while pretending to suppress it. Yet Stamboliski could not make up his mind to break with these disloyal ministers, although they were also implicated in financial swindles. He was afraid of splitting the Peasant Party."[38]

The confessions of Todorov are very revealing. Stamboliski, according to Todorov the only true representative of the wishes and the character of the Bulgarian people to appear since the foundation of a Bulgarian state, formed a government only twice. The first time he had as ministers, men who were responsible for Bulgaria's policy during World War I; the second time five of his ministers opposed his foreign policy, a policy which is the most important and only argument of Todorov, when trying to excuse the Bulgarian people. Does not this prove—together with the facility with which Stamboliski was put aside

[38] Kosta Todorov: Balkan firebrand (Chicago-New York 1943), p. 172 and 169.

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—that it was not Stamboliski, who was rather a dreamer than a politician, but his ministers who represented the true feelings of the Bulgarian people?

3. Sermons About "Unity" and "Confederation"

It is, of course, the right and the duty of each man whose fatherland is in danger to defend it; for this Mr. Todorov is really praiseworthy. However, this gentleman does not only appear as a defender of Bulgaria in her difficult moments. He appears also as the herald of a Balkan confederation. In an article he published in "The American Mercury"[39] Todorov maintains that the only solution for the Balkan problem, a solution which should be supported after the war by the Allies, is the creation of a Balkan Democratic Confederation in accordance with the desires of all the Balkan peoples, and as expressed during the past fifty years and strengthened by the trials of the present war. The peoples of the Balkans, says Todorov, are so thoroughly mixed that it is impossible to fix their exact frontiers. The Balkan Peninsula is, on the one hand, a mosaic of nationalities, and on the other, a geographical unity.

Before examining the question of a Balkan confederation it is wise to examine whether Todorov is the suitable champion of this idea and how far he, personally, inspires any confidence of sincerity and elementary political morality. Would not a certain supranational impartiality—better, a simple historical honesty—be an indispensable presupposition for him who waves the olive branch of cooperation?

4. Todorov's Historical Honesty

Todorov's book covers the whole period from 1905 to 1942; he refers not only to the Balkan events but also to those of international significance during that period. The historical honesty of this progressive Bulgarian, and this enemy of Italian fascism and German National-Socialism, this herald of cooperation among Balkan peoples may be seen from the following:

[39] Kosta Todorov: Can the Balkans be unified? In "The American Mercury" (September 1943), p. 322-330, and "L'Union des Balkans est-elle possible" in "Le Progres Egyptien" (July 12, 1943).

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a) He passes over the Greek victories against the Turks, during the Balkan wars of 1912 and their contribution to the success of the common struggle. He only mentions that "The Bulgarian army under General Dimitriev triumphed brilliantly in the battle of Kirk-Kilisse and Lule-Burgaz. The Serbs triumphed at Kumanovo. The military power of Turkey was scattered. . . . The war ended in complete defeat for Turkey and the liberation of Macedonia" (p. 37). Thus he forgets the victories of the Greek army and the great contribution of the Greek Navy in this victory over the Ottoman Empire.

b) He is silent about the Bulgarian massacres of Greeks in Thrace and Macedonia in 1913 when the second Balkan war was going on, though confessing the massacres against the turks (p. 41).

c) He passes over the Bulgarian massacres of Greeks in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace during 1917, though he confesses the massacres of Serbs (p. 96).

d) Although remembering all the international events, he passes over in silence the treacherous Italian attack on Greece in 1940 and the seven months' long heroic and victorious resistance of the Greek people.* Todorov remembers, as one can see, all the international events. He only forgets Greece.

e) He passes over in silence the occupation of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace by the Bulgarian army, and over the crimes committed by his countrymen against the Greek populations from April 1941 onwards. Speaking of the orgy of the Axis and its satellites in the Balkans, he states, "In Croatia, Pavelic, installed as a 'chief' of state by the Germans and Italians, maintains a hideous reign of terror and assassinates all who oppose

* "Six months passed," he writes, "and war came. . . For eighteen months I was forced to watch the developments from afar; the partition of Poland, the fall of Denmark and Norway, the seizure of the Low Countries, the incredible French disaster, the heroic British resistance, the approach of the conflict to the Balkans. On the day the German army entered Bulgaria—March 1st, 1941—I knew I could remain no longer on the sidelines. I wrote at once to Winston Churchill, repudiating the contemptible action of King Boris and offered my services as a soldier. While awaiting a reply, I followed the heroic drama of Yugoslavia climaxed by the Revolution of March 27th, when the Serbian people rose against Prince Paul and his ministers who had signed the supine Vienne Pact delivering the country to the Nazis."

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him, whether Serbs or Croats. King Boris has occupied a large part of Yugoslavian territory. . . ." (p. 263). This silence appears to indicate that Todorov agrees with the policy of Boris towards Greece.

f) Finally, when Mr. Todorov speaks on behalf of the victims of Fascism and National-Socialism (from whom did he get this right?) he mentions Russians, Poles, Czechs, Fighting French, Yugoslavs, Norwegians, Dutch and Belgians (p. 336) and omits once more the Greeks.

All these are matters which unavoidably raise suspicions. How can this consistant omission of Greece be explained? Todorov, the representative of the progressive left wing of the Bulgarian people and the man who undertook a mortal struggle against the conservative and comitadji party of Bulgaria, does not appear to disapprove in any way of the crimes committed against Greece by his countrymen from whom he is separated by a deep political hatred. This is rather incompatible with his championing of a Balkan Federation.

5. The Dream of a "Greater Bulgaria"

The reason for this inconsistency is that almost all the representatives of the Bulgarian people—kings, premiers, ministers, politicians, officers, scientists, intellectuals, men of letters, comitadjis—and almost all the politically active elements among these people, irrespective of their political belief or ideas—are obsessed by the fixed idea of accomplishing the dream of a "Greater Bulgaria," which they had lived for five months on the map, between the Treaty of San Stefano and the Treaty of Berlin.

After the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, Turkey was forced to sign in March 1878 the Treaty of San Stefano by virtue of which (art. 6) an independent Principality under the sovereignty of the Sultan was constituted, extending from the Danube to the Aegean Sea and from the Black Sea to the Pindos Mountain. In this principality not only Bulgaria proper was included, but also Eastern Rumelia, part of Thrace, the regions of Salonica,

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Korytsa, Ochrida and Skopia. However, this monstrous creation of the tsarist mind was never realized; through the action of the European Powers, which convened on the initiative of Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield) at the Congress of Berlin in July 1878, the new Bulgarian principality was limited to its Balkan natural and ethnological limits from the Danube up to the Aimes Mountains. Thus was Bulgaria's independence won for her entirely by foreigners; alone among the Balkan states she has the dubious distinction of never having made the slightest attempt to achieve her own freedom.

The poison of the Treaty of San Stefano, however, has remained in Bulgarian minds. Since then the Bulgars have been obsessed by the vision of a "Greater Bulgaria." It is only in the light of this mentality that the foreign policy of Bulgaria, from 1878 and thereafter, can be explained. It is a policy which indisputably shows some constancy notwithstanding government changes, interior disputes and internal disagreement as to the tactics to be followed for its achievement.[40] This dream was at last becoming a reality in present times, through the alliance of Bulgaria with the Axis and the temporary German domination in the Balkans. It is thus noteworthy that the frontiers of Bulgaria, as appearing with the territories they occupied, were about the same as those decided on by the Treaty of San Stefano. A statement of the Bulgarian deputy, H. Siskov, outstanding member of the Sobranie and head of the Bulgarian parliamentary committee which visited Berlin in August 1943, during a lecture delivered in Berlin on August 15, reflects matters perfectly. "The foreign policy which Bulgaria follows and applies," said he, "is not a personal policy imposed from above, or a policy of one party or of one political group. It is a national political line, from which no regime and no political party during any period or under any circumstances can or will deviate from. It is a policy based on the will of the whole Bulgarian nation, unbreakably united."

[40] As known, the Bulgarian national anthem starts and ends with the words: "Constantinople (Tsarigrad) is ours!"

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The army, the Church, the organizations of reserve officers and N.C.O.'s, the comitadjis, who under Ivan Michailov have deep sympathies among the army, the teachers, the press and financial circles, the "Brannik" organization (the National Bulgarian Youth, which has about 250,000 members) the old parties of the right, the old democratic parties of the centre under Mushanov and the left wing, from the agrarians up to the labour party (agrarians, pladnetsi, socialists, labourists), i.e., all the political and dynamic organizations of Bulgaria are in fact in absolute agreement about the robbing of Greek and Serbian territory.

The agrarians—the inheritors of Stamboliski's tradition—now under Getchov, not only agreed with the government but also participated in it with the minister for National Economy, Zacharief, who is an agrarian. No agrarian has criticized either the annexation of Greek territories or the crimes committed there against Greek populations. Agriculturists, employees of agricultural associations, and peasants, members of the agrarian party, have had a share in the booty either by earning high salaries, which they received in the plundered territories, or by their settlement on Greek properties. The socialists also forgot their principles, just like in 1915, when they supported Ferdinand's policy and took part in the plundering, judging from the fact that their famous cooperative association "Napredek" has made tremendous profits by robbing the Greeks in Western Thrace and Eastern Macedonia.

The true working class—the industrial proletariat—represents only a very small percentage of the Bulgarian people. It is well known, over 80% of the Bulgarians are occupied with agricultural works and in stock farming; thus, even if we suppose that the whole working class is not chauvinistic and disapproves of the imperialistic tendencies of the other classes, the whole picture does not change. Generally speaking, neither from the right wing and the center nor from the left has the slightest protest ever been made for the crimes committed against Greece. It is characteristic that the opposition parties at the parliament

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have urged the government to follow a policy of approach towards Turkey and the Soviet Union and to evacuate the foreign territories under occupation; however, they took care to point out that Macedonia and Thrace, which are Bulgarian and for which the Bulgarian people has paid with blood, must be excepted.

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CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The responsibility of the majority of the Bulgarian people and their leaders in connection with their latest criminal acts against Greece, Yugoslavia and the cause of the United Nations has been shown. The Greeks—to whatever political group they may belong—have never been chauvinists or imperialists. Nevertheless they have every right to defend themselves against their enemies, while not having the right to forget the thousands of victims of Bulgarian, German and Italian occupation. The chivalry of the Greek people, which is innate and untaught, is a chivalry of ancient people, knowing to fight with self-sacrifice and heroism each time their freedom, independence and civilization are threatened.

The Bulgarians, however, like the Germans and the Italians, must not think they have the right to make any appeal to the chivalrous feelings of Greece and to her civilization; for they have shown none such feelings either towards Greece or towards the other peoples they have enslaved. If all the peoples who have committed crimes and sought the enslavement of the whole of humanity are not punished for their crimes and are not made incapable of repeating them in the future, this war, the greatest in the history of mankind, will have been fought in vain.

1. Humanity and Impunity

The millions of the victims—victims among the civil populations of the various countries—Russians, Poles, French, Chinese, Yugoslavs, Czechs, Greeks, Belgians, Dutch, Norwegians, who have been shot by the execution squads of the Axis powers, and their satellites, or who have died from starvation and hardship, are awaiting the just punishment of their torturers. The person who forgives crimes and forgets his exterminated family is no humanitarian. The demand for the moral purification of humanity from the curse of amassed crimes is deeply human, and only its satisfaction will protect our children from the danger

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of becoming again victims of unpunished and unpenitent criminals.

There is no reason to doubt that the Bulgarian people would not have dared to commit their crimes in 1941-1944 if their crimes of 1906, 1913 and 1917 had been punished. Nor did they ever repent, for they did not disapprove of their new crimes, notwithstanding the fact that the Interallied committee which carried out investigations upon the Bulgarian crimes of 1917, in concluding its reports, asked that "the Bulgarian people be condemned to rectify within its means, the evil caused and measures to be taken to stop it from repeating those criminal acts." Of course, neither the Bulgarians whose names were in the list for having committed crimes were punished, nor damages paid by Bulgaria.

"Undr the Treaty of Neuilly—writes Todorov—the Bulgarian Government had to bring these people to trial, but it naturally acted slowly and unwillingly. Indeed, only one man was ever tried—Major Kulchin, charged with murder of seventeen civilians in Nish; he was convicted and hanged. A general about to be arrested on similar charges shot himself. What was worse, the ringleaders—the Macedonian chiefs, Todor Alexandrov, General Alexander Protoguerov, and Lefterov—had escaped from prison in Sofia by bribing the authorities."[41]

Has this clemency tamed the Bulgarian people?

The theory that the punishment of those peoples who have committed crimes will lead to new clashes, is unfounded. Highbrow "sociology" is an easy occupation with which the victims of war do not have the possibility to play with. However, it is exactly their opinion which should weigh most. Do the so-called "sociologists" know any of the victims of the Bulgarian, German or Italian execution squads, who, falling under their criminal blows, would have forgiven his executioners?

2. The Demands of Greece

When this war will be over and Greece will regain her freedom, she will have paid heavily in blood, privations, deaths and

[41] Kosta Todorov: Balkan firebrand (Chicago-New York), p. 141.

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destruction and will have suffered a crushing loss in human and economic matériel. Her people will expect material help from her friends, to which she is entitled because of her contribution and sacrifices in the cause of Democracy. She will also demand that peace be ensured for a long period in order that she may heal her wounds.

As a result, the Greek people demand from Bulgaria:

a. The punishment of the Bulgarian governors, military leaders, and all those responsible for the crimes executed against the populations of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, according to the principles about punishment of war criminals, proclaimed by the United Nations.

b. Damages to be paid to the families of the victims due to executions, starvation, privation, hardships and to those who were forced or compelled to abandon their homes, their work and their fortunes in the territories occupied by Bulgarians, as well as to those used for forced labour.

c. The strategical security of Greece after the restoration of her prewar limts. Greece has the right to a geographical frontier which she can successfully defend against any aggression by Bulgaria and which, in the case of an attack by vastly superior forces, as in the present war, could be used to check the advance of the enemy, until such time as her allies could come to her aid. Such a geographical frontier would prevent the creation of a situation in which a Great Power might endanger the security of the Balkans. In regard to this point it is essential that the northern frontiers of Greece should be extended at least up the summits of the mountain Orvilos (Rilos) and the Rodope Mountains (Mousala). The summits over 2,000 metres high must be held by Greece. This Greek demand does not derive from any imperialistic designs. It is simply a primary means of ensuring security. With the above suggested settlement of frontiers, no significant Bulgarian population will come under Greek rule, but mainly the Pomaks (Moslems) who live in these areas,[42] and who have always preferred Greek tolerance to Bulgarian

[42] "Greece's expectations." Article in "Spectator" of 3:12, 1943. Cf. also P. A. Argyropoulos: "L' heure de la Bulgarie" in "Le Progres Egyptien" of 24:4, 1944.

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oppression. It is understood that it will be necessary to annex at least the whole valley of the Arda River, to Greek Thrace.

d. That all measures which the United Nations are to impose on Germany, Italy and Japan, in order to make them incapable of repeating their present crimes in the future against liberal and pacific peoples, be also taken against Bulgaria. Among these measures the military occupation of certain regions like Eastern Rumelia, for some years, as a guarantee can be considered, till full assurance has been obtained that invasions, as such of 1912-13, 1916-18 and 1941 will not be repeated, and as an indemnity for all the destruction and plunder committed by the Bulgarians in Greek Thrace and Macedonia.

When this minimum of Greek demands will be satisfied, and when Bulgaria will be cleansed of all her crimes of the past and of the present, then Greece—who has never had dreams of exterminating peoples, like Bulgaria—will not have any objection to cooperating either by the usual form of collaboration with her neighbours, or in the frame of an Eastern Confederation. However, it should be repeated once more, the security of the richest Greek provinces, which Bulgaria covets from old, and without which it is impossible for Greece to exist, even as a relatively self-sufficient and free country, must be based on solid foundations, and the demands of Justice must be satisfied.

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